COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING #4
Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. Project updates.
3. Environmental Assessment.
4. Station design.
Section 106
(Cultural and Historic Resources)
Section 106 Overview

• Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to evaluate impact of federally funded projects on historic properties to determine potential effects.

• An historic property is one that is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, based on:
  – Association with a historically significant event.
  – Association with the lives of significant persons.
  – Design/construction.
  – Potential to yield important historical or prehistorical information.
Section 106

• Purpose: To identify historic properties, assess potential adverse effects to these properties and establish measures to mitigate or avoid these effects.

• Process.
  – Identify study area for architecture and archaeology.
  – Phase I analysis – inventory.
  – Phase II analysis – more detailed analysis.
  – Refine area of potential effect.
  – Assess effects.
  – Identify mitigation, as needed.
Architectural Investigations to Date

- Around 700 properties reviewed to date.
- 15 resources identified for Phase II study.
  - Structures, complexes, districts, road and rail segments.
  - Associated with significant events, persons, styles or methods, and/or may yield important historical information.

Source: White Bear Lake Magazine
Source: streets.mn
Downtown White Bear Lake Station
Station Location Public Engagement

- January 4: Pop-up at White Bear Lake library.
- January 8: Pop-up at White Bear Area YMCA.
- January 10: Open house at White Bear Lake City Hall.
- January 9-31: Online survey.
- February 12: White Bear Lake City Council meeting.
- February 26: White Bear Lake City Council meeting.
Station Location Update

- Evaluated six station location options based on:
  - Station accessibility.
  - Proximity to high-intensity development.
  - Efficient transit operations.
  - Minimize traffic impacts.
  - Minimize property impacts.
  - Public input.
- White Bear Lake City Council approved recommendation to advance 7th Street and Washington Avenue option on February 26.
Confirmed the downtown White Bear Lake station location based on recommendation from Technical Advisory Committee and City of White Bear Lake.
Confirmed recommendations from peer review:
- Eliminate mixed traffic option on Jackson Street.
- Eliminate single lane guideway under Forest Street bridge.
- Shift trail configuration change from Arlington Avenue to Larpenteur Avenue.
- Use parallel platform configuration at Larpenteur Avenue and Frost Avenue stations.
- Eliminate BNSF right-of-way option north of I-694.
Guideway Configurations

- Dedicated right-of-way: buses have an exclusive lane with limited or no access for private cars.
  - Outside-running: dedicated bus lanes are located outside car travel lanes.
  - Center-running: dedicated bus lanes are in the center of the road with car travel lanes on either side.
  - Dedicated guideway: buses operate in lanes separate from a road.
  - Business access and transit (BAT): buses have a dedicated lane that private cars can use to turn right.

- Mixed traffic: buses and private cars operate in the same lane.
Guideway Configuration Example

Outside Running
Guideway Configuration Example

Center Running
Guideway Configuration Example

Dedicated Guideway
Guideway Configuration

Business Access and Transit

Legend:
- Proposed Bus Guideway
- Mixed Traffic
- Proposed Traffic Lanes
- Proposed Sidewalk & Multi-Use Trail
- Proposed BRT Platform
- Proposed Landscape
- Proposed Bridge
- Future Work by Others
- Proposed Retaining Wall
- Proposed Signal System
- Existing Signal System
- Local Bus Route

Note: BAT LANE AUTHORIZATION TO BE FURTHER COORDINATED WITH LANDOT.
Guideway Configuration Example

Mixed Traffic
Recent Public Engagement Activities

• January 22 and 23: Pop-up at St. John’s Hospital.
• January 23: Update to District 5 Payne-Phalen Planning Council.
• February 2: Winter Carnival Family Day.
• February: Hmong Village survey.
Recent Public Engagement Activities

- March 6: Presentation at Pedro Park Open House
- March 26: Hamm’s area business engagement meeting.
- March 27: Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Visioning Workshop.
- April 7: Northeast Metro Community Expo.
- Ongoing interactive map.
Hamm’s Area Business Engagement

• Organized in collaboration with ESABA and Everest LLC.
• 8 people representing different businesses attended.
• Key takeaways:
  – Overall support for improved transit in the area and recognition that many workers in the area use transit to get to work.
  – Strong interest in improving biking and walking connections to Rush Line BRT stations and general connectivity within the neighborhood.
Public Engagement Themes

• Hmong Village:
  – 250 surveys distributed; 25 returned.
  – Most business owners drive, often because they are unaware of public transit options, and few of them know if their employees or customers take transit.
  – It may be beneficial to do an educational/awareness campaign in Hmong Village about nearby transit options.
  – A customer/employee survey may be of benefit to learn more about travel patterns of other people regularly traveling to Hmong Village.

• St. John’s Hospital:
  – Support for improved transit service to the hospital among staff.
Ongoing Public Engagement

• Examples of changes made in response to input:
  – Station locations for Arcade Street and Downtown White Bear Lake.
  – Addition of Cook Avenue and Buerkle Road stations.

• Upcoming opportunities for input:
  – Design in the Ramsey County rail right-of-way.
  – Bicycle and pedestrian safety.
  – Station design.
Upcoming Public Engagement

• Focus areas:
  – Highway 36 station area business.
  – Downtown Saint Paul.
  – Ramsey County rail right-of-way.
  – Weaver Elementary School.

• Attendance at community events throughout the corridor during the spring and summer.
Scheduled Public Engagement Activities

- April 13: Pop-up at Saint Paul Farmers’ Market.
- April 26: Weaver Elementary School Carnival.
- May 5: West Side Cinco de Mayo Celebration.
- May 7: Weaver Elementary Parent Information Night.
- May 14: Maplewood Bike Rodeo.
- June 1: WaterFest at Phalen Regional Park.
- June 1-2: Union Depot Train Day.
Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Visioning Framework Workshop

• Key questions addressed:
  – What is important?
  – What is the vision for the Ramsey County rail right-of-way?
  – What are potential design solutions?

• Interactive workshop.
  – Table exercise reviewing and discussing dedicated BRT and Bruce Vento Trail co-location.
  – Design preference exercise.
Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Visioning Framework Workshop

- Design elements considered.
  - Trail/BRT separation.
  - Grade separation.
  - Landscaping.
  - Stormwater treatment.
  - Fencing.
  - Buffer/screening.
  - Trail lighting.
  - Wayfinding/signage.
  - Trailhead/amenities.
Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Visioning Framework Workshop

• Major takeaways:
  – Maintenance is a common concern.
  – Context is important – look to residents and adjacent property owners for additional guidance.
  – This is an opportunity to showcase the historic nature of the rail corridor.
  – There is a preference towards maximizing green space and natural features.
  – There is a desire to maximize permeability and pedestrian access to and across the corridor.
  – Safety and wayfinding continue to be areas of importance.
Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Visioning Framework Schedule

Visioning Framework Workshop
Visioning Framework Development
Incorporate into Design Concepts
Public Engagement
Finalize Visioning Framework

SPRING SUMMER FALL
Environmental Assessment
National Environmental Policy Act

- National Environmental Policy Act of 1970 requires federal agencies to evaluate the environmental effects of their actions.
- Because Rush Line BRT intends to pursue federal funding, an environmental document must be completed for the project.
Levels of Environmental Analysis

• Categorical Exclusion.
• Environmental Assessment, followed by:
  – Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or
  – Environmental Impact Statement.

Pictured: Fonzie, not FONSI.
Environmental Assessment: Purpose

• Provides evidence and analysis for whether an Environmental Impact Statement or Finding of No Significant Impact is required.
• Aids in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act when an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary.
• Facilitates preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement if one is needed.
Environmental Assessment Contents

- The purpose and need for the Rush Line BRT Project.
- A written and visual description of the transit alternatives (routes, modes of transit) considered.
- The short- and long-term environmental, social, cultural and transportation-related impacts of each alternative.
- A listing of agencies and people consulted.
Environmental Impact Areas

- Transportation.
  - Transit.
  - Traffic.
  - Pedestrians and bicycles.
  - Parking, driveways and loading zones.
- Land use plan compatibility.
- Neighborhoods and community resources.
- Land acquisitions and relocations.
- Economics.
- Cultural resources.
- Environmental justice.
- Safety and security.
Schedule and Update

• Technical reports under development.
  – Lay the groundwork for the Environmental Assessment.
  – Topics include traffic, noise, air and water quality, land use and visual resources.
  – No noise impacts are anticipated.

• Environmental Assessment expected to be released for public comment in fall 2020 with environmental decision in spring 2021.
Discussion

• Do you have any questions about the National Environmental Policy Act or the Environmental Assessment process for Rush Line?
• What, if any, environmental impacts are you concerned the project might have?
Station Design
• Platform size and location are determined during environmental analysis phase.
• Several standard features are included at every station.
• Station design and additional amenities may vary from station to station based on community input, surrounding physical environment, etc.
• Station design is further refined in project development and final engineering phases.
Standard Features

- NexTrip real-time departure signs.
- Raised platforms.
- Maps.
- Benches.
- Heat.
- Lighting.
- Bike racks.
- Trash and recycling bins.
- Ticket machines.
Elements to Consider in Station Design

- Safety and security.
- Design and aesthetics.
- Additional station amenities.
- Sidewalk and trail connections to station.
- Accessible connections and station amenities for people with disabilities and/or mobility devices, strollers, carts, etc.
- Cohesive station design with the surrounding community and, if present, historic resources.

Source: Transit Street Design Guide (NACTO)
Potential Added Amenities

- Designated vehicle drop-off and pick-up zone.
- Bicycle lockers.
- Bicycle tune-up station.
- Wayfinding signage to local institutions and attractions.
- Landscaping and greenery.
- Public art.
- WiFi hotspot.
- USB charging port or outlet.
- Design features: specific theme, architectural style, building materials, colors, etc.
Discussion

• How should standard station features be configured?
• What station amenities (fix-it stations, public art, etc.) are most important to you?
• Which elements (safety, aesthetics, etc.) are most important to consider in station design?
• If you could design a Rush Line BRT station, what would it look like? If you designed it to reflect your community, what design features would you use?
Next Meeting

• A Doodle poll will be distributed for the next Community Advisory Committee in the summer.
• Contact the co-chairs and Frank if you have ideas for future agenda items.